

**Vermont State Hospital
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, Vermont
05671-2501**

**(802) 241-1000
Fax #: (802) 241-3001**



PATIENT HANDBOOK

Vermont State Hospital was founded on August 8, 1891, by the Vermont State Legislature to serve the needs of Vermonters with mental illness who were unable to receive treatment and care in other settings.

Today, Vermont State Hospital continues with this purpose and is an adult comprehensive inpatient psychiatric treatment center within the Vermont Department of Mental Health.

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Vermont State Hospital Mission, Vision, Values Statement

Mission:

The Vermont State Hospital (VSH) provides excellent care and treatment in a safe, respectful environment in order to promote hope and quality of life for the individual with mental illness.

Vision:

The Vermont State Hospital will be a center for excellence in the provision of mental health treatment, education and research in collaboration with the community and the people it serves.

Values:

The Vermont State Hospital:

- **Respects the person and their life goals.**
- **Recognizes the individual's rights and responsibilities toward the attainment of those goals.**
- **Believes in the individual's ability to recover from life crises.**
- **Promotes an environment which fosters growth and change through the provision of knowledge-based treatment.**
- **Supports a culture where research, education, and training enhance professional competence.**

Treatment and Care at VSH

Treatment staff and other employees of the Vermont State Hospital will work with you to ensure that you are discharged as soon as hospitalization is no longer necessary.

VSH staff members encourage you to join with us in developing and carrying out your treatment plan. With your permission, we will also invite the participation of your family members and friends.

Our goal is to help you regain healthfulness and stability so you can make a successful return to your home community as soon as possible.

Admission – Dale Building

The Admissions Office/Reception Area is open 24 hours a day. When you first arrive at VSH, you will meet with admissions staff, a physician, and nursing personnel. The purpose of these meetings is to gather important information so the staff can begin to get to know you, and so you can begin to know some of the members of the VSH staff. These meetings also help the treatment staff to develop an initial plan for your care.

There are three treatment units:

Brooks One - a 19 bed admission unit, primarily for men

Brooks Two - a 21 bed admission unit for men and women

Brooks Rehab – a 14 bed unit for men and women

Following your admission interview, you will be escorted by unit staff (nurses and psychiatric technicians) to your assigned unit. Nursing staff will orient you to the new surroundings, assist with your immediate needs, and list and label your personal belongings.

Within 24 hours of admissions, you will be offered a routine physical examination, which may include tests of blood and urine. This examination helps the physician identify any physical problems that may require treatment.

Any medications which you bring to the hospital will be listed as patient personal property and stored in the Pharmacy. The medications you brought to the hospital that have been approved by your physician will be returned to you at the time of discharge. While you are in the hospital, the VSH Pharmacy will supply all of your prescribed medications.

Treatment Team

You will be assigned a psychiatrist, a registered nurse, and a social worker who will work with you to develop and carry out a plan for your care. Many other professionals and support staff will contribute to your treatment at the hospital. Other hospital providers include psychologists, therapeutic and recovery services staff, psychiatric technicians, and dietary services personnel. Additional specialties that are available for VSH patients include neurology, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. A physician is available on site 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

My treatment team:

Physician/psychiatrist: _____

Nurse: _____

Social Worker: _____

Family member/Friend: _____

Other: _____

Planning for Discharge

You and other members of your treatment team will develop a plan to accomplish whatever is needed during your hospitalization for a successful return to life outside the hospital. With your permission, members of your treatment team will work with your family and/or significant others to ensure that you are discharged to an appropriate living situation. Your team will also work with appropriate community providers and agencies to connect you with providers and services in the community.

Therapeutic & Recovery Services (TRS)

Therapeutic and Recovery Services (TRS) is responsible for providing therapeutic group services. TRS also includes the Volunteer Services Coordinator, Substance Abuse Counselor, and works with Vermont Psychiatric Survivors to support and supervise the VSH Patient Representative.

Some group activities are provided on the inpatient units, but most are done in the off-unit Treatment Mall. The Treatment Mall is an area near the inpatient units where patients spend time each day participating in psychosocial skill building activities. Your individualized schedule of activities will be selected by you and the other members of your treatment team. Groups are also offered on nights and weekends.

Patient Representative

A Patient Representative is available to help you in the following ways:

- Speak with you about problems you are experiencing at VSH.
- Provide information about person's rights and the grievance process.
- Attend treatment plan meetings with you at your request.
- Speak with treatment team members with you at your request.
- Help you complete satisfaction surveys.

The Patient Representative's telephone number: 3114

Levels of Autonomy and Supervision

Your "level of autonomy and supervision" is determined in collaboration with your doctor, nurse, social worker, and other members of your treatment team.

The five Levels of Autonomy and Supervision are defined as follows:

1. **Unsupervised Hospital and Grounds:** You may leave the unit without staff escort. You may not leave the Hospital Grounds.
2. **Group Supervised:** You may leave the unit under staff escort to participate in supervised group activities.

3. **Individually Supervised Off Unit:** You may be escorted by a staff member within Hospital Grounds.
4. **Restricted to Secure Areas:** You may be escorted to the staffed yard or the Brooks Building activities area. You may participate in groups and activities in the basement area under direct staff supervision.
5. **Restricted to the Unit:** You may leave the unit to attend legal proceedings or medical appointments. If you are restricted to the unit, you will have access to the porch on a daily basis.

“Secure Areas” refers to the locked units, secure yard areas, and Brooks Building activities area including the Treatment Mall.

“Unit” refers to any one of Vermont State Hospital’s three designated patient care areas, i.e., Brooks One, Brooks Two, or Brooks Rehab. The unit includes attached porches.

Standard off-unit times are from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

Daily Schedule

Each unit varies slightly in its schedule. The exact times of events, programs, meetings, meals, breaks, and bedtime are posted on each unit.

Food

Meals are served in the unit dining areas.

- **Breakfast: 7:30 AM**
- **Lunch: 11:30 AM**
- **Dinner: 5:00 PM**

Afternoon and evening snacks are provided. Snack times may vary slightly on each unit.

Please speak with a member of the unit staff about guidelines for keeping food in your room.

The Dietician can be reached by message phone at 3216. You are encouraged to call for special food requests or to report problems with meals.

Specific food preferences will be met whenever possible. Therapeutic diets, religious, vegetarian, low fat, low and high calorie diets are available and are will be provided when ordered by a physician.

Religious Services

A volunteer chaplain is available to offer spiritual support on a regular basis. If you have questions about the volunteer chaplain service, or to request spiritual support from a specific faith background, you are encouraged to contact the VSH Volunteer Services Coordinator at extension 4072.

Tobacco-Free Hospital

Medical evidence clearly shows that smoking and other use of tobacco products is harmful to the health of smokers and nonsmokers. To provide a healthy environment for you and all other patients, this hospital will offer counseling about the hazards of smoking and the use of other tobacco products, offer smoking/tobacco cessation programs to decrease or stop nicotine intake, provide nicotine replacement products when necessary, and implement a smoke- and tobacco-free environment.

Use of any tobacco product is prohibited on the VSH Hospital Grounds.

If you have cigarettes and other tobacco-related products when you arrive, you will be required to turn them in to hospital staff; these materials will be returned to you at discharge. Any tobacco product found in your possession will be confiscated by staff and returned to you at discharge. Visitors are not to provide you with tobacco products.

Nicotine replacement materials will be prescribed as needed to address and reduce any discomfort that occurs as a result of smoking/tobacco cessation.

Sleep

Sleep disturbances frequently accompany mental health problems. Most people sleep better in a quiet environment, and sleeping well helps people feel better. Please let members of your treatment team know when you are having difficulty sleeping.

Breakfast is served at 7:30 AM. If you choose to remain in bed after 7:30 AM, you will be asked to be out of bed, dressed, and out of your room by 8:30 AM.

Out of room schedule is as follows; 8:30 AM-11:00 AM and 1:00 PM-3:00 PM.

Friendships and Intimacy

Friendships between patients are often important positive, supportive aspects of a stay on an inpatient unit. Privacy is also very important, and the privacy of each individual patient will be protected whenever possible.

Though all patients at VSH are adults, when hospitalized, each person is considered by law and regulation to be vulnerable. Because of this assumed vulnerability, the hospital is expected to protect patients against all possible abuse and exploitation. Therefore, during hospitalization all sexual contact between patients or between a patient and a hospital visitor is prohibited.

Telephones

Telephones are available on each unit. Local calls may be made at no cost. Incoming and local calls are permitted between the hours of 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM. We encourage you to make calls outside Treatment Mall hours whenever possible.

Telephones are shared and calls may be limited to ten minutes to allow others time on the phone.

You are allowed two long distance calls per week at hospital expense. Additional long distance calls may be made if a special need exists, and with Treatment Team approval. RN's and Shift

leaders will assist you in making long distance calls. If you would like to purchase a long distance calling card to make additional long distance calls, a member of the unit staff will assist you to do so.

At certain times of the day, staff members may not be available to assist with calls. For example, staff are often not available for calls between 2:30 PM and 3:30 PM

You may refuse to receive a phone call.

Phone use may be limited or supervised if your calls have been abusive, obscene, threatening, legally prohibited, or experienced as excessively frequent by the person you have been calling.

While you are a patient at the Vermont State Hospital, it is not necessary to call 911 or the police.

If your phone access has been limited or restricted, you will still be allowed to contact your attorney (Legal Aid), Disability Rights Vermont, and Adult Protective Services. You may also be allowed to call family members/friends and others who are willing to receive your calls.

Patient Phone Numbers: (An incoming call can also be received through the switchboard at 241-1000 and connected to the unit or other area.)

<u>Brooks One</u>	<u>Brooks Two</u>	<u>Brooks Rehab</u>
241-4373	241-4370	241-4376
241-4374	241-4371	241-4377
241-4375	241-4372	241-4378

Other Important Phone Numbers:

VSH Switchboard	241-1000
Vermont Legal Aid	241-3222
Disability Rights Vermont	229-1355 or 1-800-834-7890
Adult Protective Services, Vermont	
Department of Aging and Disabilities	1-800-564-1612

Purchasing Personal Items While in the Hospital

You may make outside purchases of personal items each week during the “Commissary Run.” Items purchased must be approved by your Treatment Team. A member of the unit staff will explain how you may make outside purchases.

If you have funds available, you may request any items on the Commissary Run, with the exception of “restricted items” (items that could pose a safety risk) and food.

If you are without financial resources, you may request a small allowance from the Patient Benefit Fund.

Personal Cleanliness and Care of Personal and Common Living Areas

We encourage you to keep your room in an orderly condition. If necessary, staff will assist you. Nursing staff will check your room for cleanliness each morning or more often if necessary. Housekeeping staff will periodically clean rooms.

We ask that you be up and dressed for breakfast. Please remain dressed until after evening visiting hours. Clothing should be appropriate for public wear. Shirts are required.

We strongly recommend suitable footwear at all times to prevent injury and/or infection.

There is a washer and dryer located on each unit and the times for use are posted. Staff will help if you need assistance with laundry.

We ask that you clean up after yourself in the common living areas (activity rooms, dining room, yard, etc) as well as the bathroom.

Personal Possessions

Throughout hospitalization, all personal possessions will be inventoried and documented. You will be provided with a copy of the inventory of your belongings.

Outfits of clothing are limited to three. Additional clothing may be stored in a secure area but we encourage you to ask a visitor to keep your additional clothing for you while you are in the hospital.

You will be allowed to keep personal photographs, artwork, books, and mail in your room.

Grooming products will be kept in a locked area and dispensed by staff as needed. Please note that grooming products in glass containers (such as perfume or aftershave) may not be used on the unit for safety reasons.

Unauthorized articles or possessions are called restricted items. Some examples:

- medications, illegal drugs, alcohol, and toxic substances;
- matches, lighters, cigarettes, tobacco, and other smoking materials;
- shampoo, hair care products, aerosol products, and razors;
- hair dryers, curling irons, and other electrical appliances;
- guns, knives, and other items that may be used as weapons;
- mirrors, bottles, and other items made out of glass;
- scissors, sewing kits, and other sharp objects;
- shoe laces, ties, string, straps, cords, belts, drawstrings, and other items that could be used for strangulation;
- plastic bags;
- keys;
- perishable food when it is in a patient's room;
- jewelry that could be used for strangulation or cutting;
- any other item that, within the discretion of staff, poses a potential risk of harm to self or others.

Items made in Occupational Therapy that cannot be kept on the unit will be stored and returned when you leave the hospital.

Personal Vehicles

During hospitalization, you will not be allowed to keep a motor vehicle on the Complex premises, or to keep the keys to vehicles in your possession. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the VSH Executive Director.

Television

Televisions, DVD players, and Wii's are available on all units. Televisions may be used outside Treatment Mall hours. Only G or PG-rated movies may be shown.

Mail

Outgoing letters that are properly addressed, with a sending address and a return address, may be placed in the outgoing mail in the unit office, and will be placed in the outgoing hospital mail by unit staff.

You are permitted to mail up to seven letters per week at hospital expense.

All incoming mail will be opened by a staff member in your presence, to screen for items that could be dangerous to you or other patients, and to identify valuable items that should be stored securely while you are in the hospital. Staff members will not read your mail without your permission.

Writing implements shall be available to you, with the level of individual supervision necessary at staff discretion based upon safe use.

If you would like assistance in writing a letter, just ask a staff member.

Valuables and Money

We strongly encourage you to leave valuables at home or send them home with a friend or relative. If that is not possible, valuables and larger amounts of money may be stored in the hospital safe in the Admissions area, to be reclaimed by you at the time of discharge.

Any money that is received for you by the hospital during your admission will be deposited under your name in the patient trust fund account.

You may access your personal funds as needed.

You may keep up to twenty dollars (\$20.00) in your possession while on the unit. The amount is limited for your protection.

Staff members are not allowed to accept money/gifts from you, lend you money, or sell items to you.

The hospital cannot assume responsibility for the loss of money, jewelry, or other personal property that you choose to keep in your room.

Searches

For your protection and the protection of all other patients, the staff will periodically conduct searches for items that are not allowed on the unit. All patient rooms are checked (the individual who lives in the room may be present) for safety on a regular basis. When you return from time off the unit, you will be checked and scanned for items that are not allowed on the unit.

Visitors

Visitors are welcomed at the Vermont State Hospital.

- You may visit other patients in common areas of the unit, but are not permitted in each other's bedrooms, except for roommates on Brooks Rehab.
- Visitors enter through the Admissions Building and will be escorted to the unit by a member of hospital staff.
- Visits may be limited to 30 minutes so that all patients are able to spend time with their visitors.
- Visiting hours on all units are daily from 3PM - 4PM and 6PM - 8PM. On Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays, visiting hours are from 10AM - 11AM, 1PM – 4PM and 6PM – 8PM.
- Exceptions to the visiting hours may be made by the charge nurse of each unit.
- You shall be permitted to receive visits from anyone with whom you wish to meet. Visits will only be limited when your treatment team has found that visits by a specific individual may be harmful to you or another patient, or where an individual visitor fails to abide by the rules set forth in the *VSH Visitors Policy*,
- Visitors are not allowed on the main part of the unit in order to maintain safety and confidentiality for other patients. Persons who may have a reason to see more of the unit than the visiting areas (e.g., lawyers, advocates, licensing inspectors, non-VSH clinicians, and maintenance workers) will be escorted by a nurse or designee.
- As outlined in the VSH Visitors Policy, representatives of Disability Rights Vermont (DRVT) have a right to reasonable unaccompanied access to all VSH patients. All other visits to you and other patients on Brooks 1 and Brooks 2 are to occur in the designated visiting areas.
- Visits by children under the age of 18 must be pre-approved by your treatment team. Any approved visitor under the age of 18 must be accompanied and supervised at all times by a parent or guardian. VSH staff will not be responsible for supervising visiting children.

There are four kinds of visits at VSH:

1. Screened – a visit that takes place through a barrier window in the interview room located on Brooks 1.
2. Supervised – a visit that takes place on the unit, under the visual observation of a staff member. On Brooks 1 and Brooks 2 these visits take place in the interview room or the dining room. On Brooks Rehab, these visits may occur in the dining room.
3. Unsupervised – a visit occurring on the unit, without staff in close attendance. On Brooks 1 and Brooks 2 these visits take place in the interview room or the dining room. On Brooks Rehab, these visits may occur in the patient care area.
4. Off Unit – a visit taking place on hospital grounds, for up to one hour; applicable only if you are assigned unsupervised hospital and grounds level of autonomy.

You and other members of your treatment team will determine whether safety or other clinical considerations warrant supervised or screened visits. Each week, you and your treatment team will review any restrictions on your right to receive visitors. At any time, you or a visitor may request that your treatment team reconsider those restrictions.

VSH Policy Manual

The Vermont State Hospital Policy Manual is posted on the VSH Policy Committee page of the Vermont Department of Mental Health website.

The VSH Policy Manual link: <http://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/committees/vsh/policy>

Reviewing Your Medical Record While Hospitalized

If you wish to review your medical record while you are hospitalized, please ask your treating physician.

If you review your record while you are a patient in the hospital, you will be accompanied by a member of the hospital staff at all times, to answer any questions and to protect the integrity of your record.

Advocates

Patient advocates from recognized advocacy organizations may visit you, and with your written consent, may read your chart in the presence of a staff member. They may not remove the chart from the unit or photocopy from it. With your permission, the advocate may submit a request for photocopies to Medical Records.

Advocates may request a tour of the unit from an RN. Advocates may file a grievance or complaint on your behalf.

Advocates will follow the general rules for visitors. Staff will announce their presence on the unit. If you wish to meet with an advocate, staff members will ensure that you are able to do so.

In addition to the rights of other advocates, advocates from Disability Rights Vermont may review records without your consent if they have reason to believe that abuse has occurred.

Vermont Psychiatric Survivors (VPS) is a statewide peer-run program that provides advocacy and peer support. At VSH there is an evening meeting each week called “WRAP”. Location and time of the meeting is posted on the bulletin boards.

VPS can be reached at (800)564-2106 or ypsinc@sover.net. VPS doesn't provide legal representation or advice.

Legal Services

Vermont Legal Aid (VLA) is a private non-profit corporation and is not part of the Vermont State Hospital. VLA staff members are available to assist you when you are hospitalized at VSH. Their phone number is 241-3222. Any information that you give to a staff member of VLA is considered confidential.

The hospital legal department and Vermont Legal Aid are separate organizations.

Forensic Evaluations

If you have pending criminal charges and are referred by the District Court to the hospital for observation and evaluation of competency and/or sanity, an outside psychiatrist will come to VSH to perform this evaluation. The psychiatrist will visit with you once or several times, have access to your medical record, and will consult with your treatment team. The evaluating psychiatrist provides a written report to the Court, to your defense attorney and to the State's Attorney. This evaluating psychiatrist will also testify at court hearings, but will not provide treatment for you while at VSH.

If you have been referred to VSH by a judge, you will be treated similarly to all other patients – you will have an assigned VSH psychiatrist and other members of a treatment team, will work with your team to develop a treatment plan, and will be encouraged to participate in all aspects of inpatient hospitalization.

Involuntary Procedures

When there is an emergency and/or a danger that you or another patient may cause serious bodily harm to yourself, to another patient, a hospital visitor or staff member, VSH staff will attempt to reduce or eliminate danger through the use of non-physical interventions.

When non-physical interventions have not been effective, or are unlikely to be effective, emergency involuntary administration of medication, seclusion, or restraints may be used.

All VSH staff members who implement involuntary procedures requiring physical interventions have been trained and receive ongoing education and training in the proper and safe use of restraints, seclusion and emergency medications, to ensure your safety, and the safety of other patients and staff.

If you are placed in seclusion or restraint, you shall be released as soon as your behavior no longer poses an imminent danger of serious bodily harm to yourself or others.

Patient Grievances – How to File a Grievance

Information about Grievances when you are a Patient at the Vermont State Hospital :

- How to file a grievance
- How file an appeal of a response to your grievance
- How the grievance process works

Complaints and concerns about service or treatment that you receive while at VSH may be brought to any hospital staff member at any time. Hospital staff will attempt to resolve all complaints and concerns as soon as possible. When a complaint cannot be resolved by staff, or the resolution is not satisfactory to you, you may file a grievance with the hospital. You may also ask a friend, relative, advocate or other representative to file a grievance for you.

To file a grievance

To file a grievance, you must write out a statement of your complaint or concern. You should include as much information as possible and include what you would like the hospital to do about your complaint or concern. If you need help writing your grievance, you can ask someone for help. The people that can help you include: VSH staff, the VSH Patient Representative (phone number: 3114), your lawyer (Vermont Legal Aid), someone from Disability Rights Vermont, a friend or a relative. You may also file a grievance within 30 days after you have been discharged.

You may contact Disability Rights Vermont (contact information below) for assistance at any stage of the grievance process by calling: (800) 834-7890

After you have written your grievance, you should send it to the VSH Quality Department. Any member of the staff can provide you with an envelope and will ensure that the grievance gets mailed to Quality.

Within 7 business days from the day that the Quality Department receives your grievance you will usually get a written response about your grievance from a member of the VSH management team, informing you of the steps taken on your behalf to investigate the grievance and the results of the grievance process. If your grievance requires more time to review or investigate, you will receive a letter letting you know that the response from the hospital will be sent to you as soon as possible and within 21 days.

Appeal to the Executive Director

If you are not satisfied with the response to your initial grievance, you may appeal the response to the Executive Director of the hospital. You appeal by sending a letter to the Quality Department explaining what happened and why you are not satisfied with the response to your grievance. You need to send the appeal letter within 10 days of the day you receive the initial response. If for some reason you can not appeal the decision within 10 days, you may mail a request for more time to the Quality Department.

Within 10 business days of receiving your appeal, the Executive Director will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your complaint or concern. You may bring a friend or another representative with you to this meeting. The meeting will be informal but you are allowed to ask questions of staff members, present any information that you want to and have the meeting tape recorded. Within 10 business days of the meeting, the Executive Director or her designee will send you a written response to your appeal.

Appeal to the Commissioner

If you are not satisfied with the response by the Executive Director, you may submit an appeal to the Commissioner of Mental Health. To appeal to the Commissioner, you should send a letter to the Quality Department explaining what happened and why you are not satisfied with the response. You must send the appeal letter within 10 days of the day you receive the response from the Executive Director. If for some reason you can not appeal the decision within 10 days, you may mail a request for more time to the Quality Department.

Within 10 business days of receiving the notice of appeal, the Commissioner, or someone designated by the Commissioner, will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your complaint or concern. You may bring a friend or another representative with you to this meeting. The meeting will be informal but you will be allowed to ask questions of staff members, present any information, and have the meeting tape recorded. Within 10 business days of the meeting, the Commissioner or his designee will send you a written response to your appeal.

For more information, please ask staff for a copy of the VSH Grievance and Appeal Policy.

Other places you may file a complaint

In addition to filing a grievance or instead of filing a grievance, you may, at any time, file a grievance directly with the Department of Mental Health, the Vermont Board of Health and/or the Vermont Medical Practice Board by forwarding the grievance to:

Commissioner
Department of Mental Health
103 South Main Street
Wasson Hall
Waterbury, VT 05671
(802) 241-4008

Board of Health/ Board of Medical Practice
Vermont Department of Health
P.O. Box 70
Burlington, VT 05402-0070
(802) 657-4220; (800) 745-7371

You may complain about abuse, neglect, or exploitation by contacting the state agency responsible for investigating such complaints by writing or calling:

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living
Division of Licensing and Protection
103 South Main Street, Ladd Hall
Waterbury, Vermont 05671-2306
(802) 241-2345; (800) 564-1612

If you are concerned about the quality of your care or premature discharge you may complain to the Northeast Health Care Quality Foundation (NHCQF). NHCQF is the organization charged with reviewing the appropriateness and quality of care rendered to Medicare beneficiaries in hospital settings. Concerns or complaints can be sent to:

NHCQF
15 Old Rollinsford Road, Suite 302
Dover, NH 03820-2830
800-772-0151 (toll free) or 603-749-1641
603-749-1195 (Fax)
www.nhcqf.org

If you have a concern about patient safety or the quality of care, you may complain to The Joint Commission at:

Office of Quality Monitoring
The Joint Commission
One Renaissance Boulevard
Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois 60181
800-994-6610
Email: complaint@jointcommission.org